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Follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development: the role of volunteerism in the promotion of social development

Andorra,* Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil,* Chile,* Cyprus,* Czech Republic, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Guatemala, Japan, Malta,* Mexico, Netherlands,* Panama,* Republic of Korea, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland,* United States of America: draft resolution

Volunteering and social development

The Commission for Social Development,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 52/17 of 20 November 1997, in which the Assembly proclaimed the year 2001 as the International Year of Volunteers, and also recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/44 of 22 July 1997,

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 55/57 of 4 December 2000, in which the Assembly requested the Commission for Social Development to make appropriate suggestions and recommendations to the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, to further the contribution of volunteering to social development,

Recalling further the outcome document of the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly, entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world", in which the General Assembly recommended the promotion of the involvement of volunteers in social development, inter alia, by encouraging Governments, taking into account the views of all actors, to develop comprehensive strategies and programmes by raising public awareness about the value and opportunities of voluntarism and by facilitating an enabling environment for individuals and other actors of civil society to engage in, and the private sector to support, voluntary activities,[1]

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* In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

[1] See General Assembly resolution S-24/2, annex, sect. II, paras. 54 and 55.

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Taking note of the contribution of United Nations Volunteers to the preparations for the special session,[2] which identified policy options that would increase Governments' support for volunteerism, including the development of strategic approaches to voluntary action, raising public awareness, the promotion of volunteering among youth, the establishment of an enabling fiscal and legislative environment, and the promotion of private-sector support and international support for voluntary activities,

Recognizing the valuable contribution of volunteering, including traditional forms of mutual aid and self-help, service delivery and other forms of civic participation, to economic and social development, benefiting society at large, communities and the individual volunteer,

Recognizing that volunteerism is an important component of any strategy aimed at poverty reduction, sustainable development and social integration, in particular overcoming social exclusion and discrimination,

Noting the different level of participation in different areas of volunteering by women and men, and recognizing the positive effect of volunteering on the empowerment of women,

Recognizing the existing contribution of United Nations system organizations to support volunteering, including the work of United Nations Volunteers around the world by placing volunteers and by promoting volunteering,

Noting that the General Assembly encouraged United Nations system organizations to ensure that the contributions of volunteers in their own areas of concern are fully recognized,

Bearing in mind that volunteering is one of the important ways in which people participate in societal development,

1. *Welcomes as a contribution* the note of the Secretary-General on the role of volunteerism in the promotion of social development and its annex,[3] which focuses on harnessing the potential of voluntary action for social development, on strategies to strengthen voluntarism and on the role of Governments;

2. *Also welcomes* the work of United Nations Volunteers as the focal point for the International Year of Volunteers in liaising with the national Year committees, and in collecting and disseminating information on the Year, including through its web site;[4]

3. *Recognizes* the importance of action by Governments to develop policy measures to support volunteering that are appropriate to the nature of volunteering in their particular countries, working in partnership with key stakeholders, including the voluntary and private sectors, while ensuring that opportunities for volunteering in all sectors are open to both women and men;

4. *Emphasizes* that support for voluntary action does not imply support for government downsizing nor for replacing paid employment;

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[2] See A/AC.253/16/Add.7.

[3] E/CN.5/2001/6.

[4] www.iyv2001.org.

5. *Encourages* States to support voluntary action for social development by creating a favourable environment, including through:

(a) Increasing public awareness of the vital contribution of volunteerism to the social and economic functioning of their communities through, inter alia, public information activities and public events;

(b) Taking general measures concerning the mobilization, preparation, training and recognition of volunteers;

(c) Establishing enabling fiscal and legislative frameworks, where they do not exist, including for community-based organizations and not-for-profit organizations engaged in volunteering;

(d) Encouraging and undertaking research into the various aspects of volunteerism and its impact on society;

(e) Ensuring citizens' access to information on opportunities for volunteering;

5 bis. *Also encourages* Governments to take into account the possible impact of general social and economic policy measures upon citizens' opportunities ability and willingness to volunteer;

6. *Further encourages Governments*, in this regard, to take into consideration volunteerism in their national development planning, recognizing the contribution of volunteerism to the achievement of social development goals;

7. *Invites Governments* to consider all means available for more people to become involved in voluntary action and to be drawn from a broader cross-section of society, including young people, older persons and people with disabilities, targeting opportunities for voluntary action to facilitate the active participation of those groups who have little or no access to the social benefits of volunteering;

8. *Encourages* United Nations system organizations to further support voluntary action for social development, including by assisting in the creation of a favourable environment, inter alia, through:

(a) Extending recognition to the contributions of volunteers;

(b) Involving volunteers in their programmes, including, as appropriate, at the national level;

(c) Long-term planning for the enhancement of social capital by inclusion of all segments of society in volunteering;

(d) Assisting Governments, upon request, in building national capacities, including in the field of training;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in his report to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session on ways that Governments and the United Nations system could support volunteering, to propose a body of recommendations for discussion on that occasion, taking into account the present resolution, the above-mentioned United Nations documents, the discussions held during the present session of the Commission for Social Development and other relevant contributions.